



CENTRE FOR EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

A Study of the  
Correspondence Education Programme  
of the Board of Secondary  
Education,  
Rajasthan,  
Ajmer.

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## CHAPTER I

Education through correspondence is a good means of grappling with the problem of numbers. It provides a viable alternative system for extending the reach of education to a large number of students who cannot attend formal institutions of education for one reason or another.

Correspondence education as an alternative to formal education is now more than two decades old in the country. But it is yet to catch the imagination of educational planners, administrators and teachers, and come to its expectations.

It was at the higher educational level that a need for correspondence was first felt in the country. Beginning with the University of Delhi in 1962 and the Punjabi University in 1968, there are at present about 23 universities, four Regional Colleges of Education, the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages and two Agricultural Universities at Ludhiana and Pant Nagar offering Correspondence Courses.

At the school level, it was the Madhya Pradesh Board of Secondary Education, which started Correspondence Courses for Intermedia/<sup>to</sup> Students in 1965, and then the Board of Secondary Education, Rajasthan and the Patrachar Vidyalaya of Delhi Administration in 1968. The Board of Secondary Education, Orissa followed suit. The Open School of the Central Board of Secondary Education at Delhi and the Institute of Correspondence Education at Allahabad are the latest additions.

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Improvement of distance learning systems through the application of educational technology is of direct interest to the Centre for Educational Technology. The Centre is particularly interested in correspondence education at the school level.

Realising that sufficient information base did not exist about Correspondence Education at secondary level, the Centre felt the need to conduct a few studies. It was felt that the information would be useful in planning these courses more meaningfully and effectively. Further, it was felt that studies would be of special value to institutions which intend to start correspondence programmes in near future.

After having completed in 1981 its first study on correspondence education offered by the Patrachar Vidyalaya, Delhi, the Centre in the following year sought the cooperation of the Boards of Secondary Education, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan for studying the correspondence courses offered by them.

The study had the following objectives:-

- (1) to study the characteristics of correspondence students
- (2) to find out reasons of correspondence students for preferring correspondence education to regular school education.
- (3) to study the process of planning, production and despatch of lesson units to students
- (4) to study the process of sending feedback to students and evaluation of students' assignments.

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- (5) to study organisation of personal contact programme
- (6) to study opinion of students towards various components of the correspondence education programme .
- (7) to make suggestions for better functioning of the programme

In the following chapters are described the methods and procedures of conducting the study.

## CHAPTER II

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The study was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, background information was collected from the two Boards on various aspects of the correspondence courses offered by them. For this purpose, concerned officials were personally interviewed. The data were also obtained from reports and information booklets brought out by the Boards in this respect.

In the second phase, information was collected from a sample of students by mailing them a questionnaire. A list of the students for drawing the sample was obtained from the Rajasthan Board in December, 1981 in respect of the students enrolled for the year 1981-82. The Madhya Pradesh Board also sent a part of the list of its students in Feb - March, 1982. Since complete list was not available even till the end of April, 1982 when final examinations commence, the second phase of study had to be abandoned in respect of the Madhya Pradesh Board; conclusions drawn from incomplete list of students would have proved erroneous.

#### Sample

There were about 10,992 students on roll with the Board of Secondary Education, Rajasthan for the one year correspondence course at the high r secondary level (Class XI) for the year 1981-82. The distribution of students among different faculties was of the following order:-

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<u>Faculties</u>	<u>Number of students</u>
Arts	5866
Commerce	3889
Science	<u>1237</u>
Total	10992

Every 20th student on the list of arts, commerce and science faculties was selected to constitute the sample. The final sample consisted of 548 students spread over different faculties as under:-

<u>Faculties</u>	<u>Sample of the Study</u>
Arts	294
Commerce	193
Science	<u>61</u>
	548

#### Data Collection

The data were collected by mailing a printed questionnaire to each student in the sample.

Data collection work commenced in early March, 1982 and continued till the end of the next month. It was felt that by this time the students would have spent full one academic year doing the correspondence course, and they would be in a position to express their opinion on different aspects of the correspondence education programme.

The questionnaire was especially designed for the purpose, based on the background information on the correspondence course collected from the Board. It was pre-tested on a few correspondence students before finalising it. The questionnaire is appended in Appendix 1.

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In the covering letter, the respondents were told how to fill the questionnaire, and requested to co-operate by returning the completed questionnaire to the Centre. A self-addressed stamped cover was enclosed to ensure a greater recovery of the completed questionnaire. After one month, a reminder was issued to all such students as had not replied by that time. Another reminder was issued after fifteen days. This helped to obtain response from a greater number of students.

In all, the filled-in questionnaires were received from 451 students i.e. more than 82% of the total sample, which is quite encouraging. The data were tabulated and analysed.

The findings of the study are presented in the next chapter that follows.

## CHAPTER III

### FINDINGS A

#### 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

##### 1.1. Courses offered

The Board of Secondary Education, Rajasthan, Ajmer introduced in 1968 a one-year correspondence course at the higher secondary level (class XI) for the benefit of non-school going private candidates. Except some categories of students, all private candidates taking this examination are required to go through the course. The course was open to the students residing in Rajasthan only. (It is now open for candidates residing outside Rajasthan too.).

The Board offers a correspondence course at the secondary level (Class X) also. However, this is a voluntary course as taking this course is not a condition for private students to sit in the secondary examination.

##### 1.2. Strength of the Students

The annual enrolment in the higher secondary correspondence course for the past few years has been to the order of about ten thousands students. The number has gone upto about thirteen thousands during 1982-83. During the year 1981-82, out of 16,174 private students who took the higher secondary examination of the Board, 10,902 (68%) were enrolled for the correspondence course. The following categories of students

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are exempted from going through the course:-

- (1) Girl students who themselves or whose guardians do not pay income tax.
- (2) Students who offer such three optional subjects for which correspondence lessons are not prepared by the Board.
- (3) Students who have already passed the higher secondary examination of the Board, but want to reappear to improve their performance.
- (4) students serving in armed forces
- (5) Disabled and blind students
- (6) students who write examination in English.

The number of students who could have been exempted but still preferred to go through the course could not be ascertained. It may, however, be mentioned that only about 700 private students offered the secondary level course, which is a voluntary course, during the year 1981-82.

### 1.3. Performance of Correspondence Students

It would be interesting to take a note of the relative percentages of regular and private students who pass annually the higher secondary examination of the Board. During the year 1980-81, these were of the following order:-

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| (i) Private students<br>(with correspondence<br>course)  | 35% |
| (ii) Private students<br>(without correspondence course) | 55% |
| (iii) Regular students                                   | 69% |

Though the pass rates of the first two groups of

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private students cannot be compared because of different categories of students in each group, it points towards a need to think of ways of bettering the achievement of the correspondence students.

#### 1.4. Procedure for Admission

The course is advertised in local, regional and national newspapers.

The distribution of the application forms, priced at Rs.2/- each, for enrolment in the course is centrally done from the office of the Board at Ajmer. The filled-in application forms should reach the Director, Correspondence Courses by 20th August each year in the normal course, and by 20th Sept with a late fee. However, in practice the enrolment is continued to be done even thereafter.

Candidates are required to send to the Board a fee of Rs.5/- towards enrolment and a fee of Rs.85/- towards the first instalment of the tuition fee by a bank draft along with the filled in application form. On enrolment, each candidate is issued an enrolment card. There is, perhaps, a need to make the enrolment procedure more simple.\*

The candidates are required to apply to the Board for permission to sit in the examination. The examination forms can be obtained from an examination centre convenient to the student; there are 700 and odd examination centres spread all over the state. The filled-in examination form is submitted

to the forwarding office of the Examination Centre along with

\*The procedure has been somewhat simplified since 1982-83.



an examination fee of Rs.55/-.

The forwarding Officer forwards the examination form to the Board on checking the enrolment card or the bank receipt of the demand draft towards the tuition and enrolment fee remitted by the student. The examination forms should reach the Board by 25th August each year in the normal course, and with late fee by 25th September.

The Board decides the eligibility of a student to sit in the examination after checking the particulars given in the examination form and the documents sent with it. It may happen that a student already enrolled for the correspondence course may not be found eligible to take the examination.

It needs to be examined whether the enrolment of a student and his/her eligibility to sit in the examination could be decided simultaneously by the Board. It could be otherwise quite frustrating for a student to have been enrolled first, and then denied admission to sit in the examination.

It is suggested that the students may deposit the examination fee along with the enrolment fee and the tuition fee in cash (it may be difficult for them, particularly the rural students, to procure a bank draft) with their respective Forwarding Officers, who may daily remit a consolidated bank draft of the day's collection along with the application forms to the Board. The forwarding officers may guide the students to fill the

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forms and advise them about their eligibility or otherwise to sit in the examination. The decision to enroll, and admit the students may finally be taken by the Board as expeditiously as possible (and if a student is not found eligible, the money may be refunded to him/her).

#### 1.5 Fees

Fees for the course is Rs.5/- towards registration and Rs.135/- towards tuition. This amount is exclusive of the examination fee, and is to be paid in two instalments.

#### 1.6. Scheme of Studies

Instructions for the course are imparted in the faculties of Arts, Commerce and Science. Each candidate has to offer English and Hindi, and three other subjects from a list of given subjects under the Arts, the Commerce or the Science Group, as the case may be.

##### (1) Arts

Any three of the following:-

- (i) Advanced Hindi/Urdu/Gujarati/Rajasthani Literature.
- (ii) Elementary Economics
- (iii) Civics
- (iv) Mathematics
- (v) Sanskrit
- (vi) History
- (vii) Advanced English/or any other foreign language
- (viii) Persian
- (ix) Music
- (x) Fine Arts
- (xi) Home Science

However, Correspondence lessons are available in the first six subjects only excluding Urdu, Gujarati and Rajasthani

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literature.

(2) Commerce

Any three of the following, the first two are compulsory.

- (i) Book Keeping
- (ii) Commercial Practice
- (iii) Elementary Geography
- (iv) Commercial Geography
- (v) Elements of Banking
- (vi) Steno typing (Shorthand and typewriting in Hindi)
- (vii) Steno typing (Shorthand and typewriting in English)
- (viii) Typewriting in Hindi and English

Correspondence lessons are available in the first five subjects only.

(3) Science

Any three of the following; the first two are compulsory.

- (i) Physics
- (ii) Chemistry
- (iii) Biology
- (iv) Mathematics.

Correspondence lessons are available in all the four subjects.

The instructional materials are in Hindi except in respect of languages where the language concerned is the medium of instructional materials and writing of examination. Students can, however, write the examination either in English or in Hindi.

In case, correspondence lessons are available only on one or two of the three optional subjects offered by a student, he/she is exempted from paying the second instalment of Rs.50/- towards the tuition fee.

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As for the Secondary Examination, Correspondence lessons are prepared in five subjects only namely, English and Mathematics (elementary) and general science among compulsory subjects, and book keeping and commercial practice as optional subjects for the commerce group in which number of failures among private candidates is comparatively higher.

#### 1.7 Syllabi

The correspondence lessons cover the prescribed syllabi. The syllabus in each subject is prescribed by the Board through its various Subject Committees. The academic staff of the Correspondence Courses is not associated with the functioning of the Subject Committees.

#### 1.8. Lessons

Course content in each subject has generally been divided in two papers. For the purpose of preparing correspondence lessons, each paper has been further sub-divided into about 16 lesson units (the range is from 13 - 16). Each postal package sent by the Board consists of about three lessons in each paper of each subject offered by a student.

All lessons are expected to reach the students by the month of February .

#### 1.9. Response Sheet Assignments

At the end <sup>of the</sup> alternate lessons, there is an assignment for the students. There are in all six students' response sheet assignments in each paper. The students are expected to submit at least 50%

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of the total assignments in each paper to the Board within 15 days of the receipt of lessons by them. The Board offers the service of evaluating and correcting students' assignments, and sending them back to the students for their self-improvement. Submission of response sheets is, however, not compulsory on part of the students.

#### 1.10. Contact Programme

Correspondence print materials is supplemented by a personal contact programme. The Board arrange contact programme for ten days during autumn vacations at about sixteen centres spread all over the state. A student is required to pay Rs.5/- as fee at the centre itself for attending contact programme. Here too, attending the contact programme is not compulsory on part of the students.

#### 1.11 Organisational Set up

The Correspondence Unit is a constituent unit of the Board, and functions from its premises in Ajmer, and within its Acts and Regulations. Other important units of the Board are (i) Examination and Evaluation (ii) Establishment and (ii) Academic/(iv) meetings (v) publications and (v) Recognition. The Chairman of the Board is the Head of the Office and the Secretary of the Board is the Chief Executive.

The Correspondence Unit is headed by a Director. However, the post is lying vacant for the last many years and the Board's efforts to fill the post has not met with success so far.

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To assist the Director, there is a provision of two Assistant Directors, one for administration and the other for academic matters.

The Administration Wing of the Correspondence Unit maintains a lesson Bank, a students' Response Sheet Assignment Unit, a Unit for Proof Reading and four Cells for Despatch of Lessons. There is also a separate section to look after Accounts.

The post of the Assistant Director (Academic) stands abolished, and the Assistant Director (Administration) looks after the Academic Wing as well. The reasons for abolishing this post were not known.

The Academic Wing is staffed by three Lecturers, one each in the faculties of Arts, Commerce, and Science, and one part time Lecturer in History. The Academic Wing is responsible for the preparation of all academic inputs for the two Correspondence Courses.

The Assistant Director (Administration) is fully responsible to the Secretary and to the Chairman of the Board. He enjoys limited financial, administrative and academic autonomy. He is obliged to obtain sanction of competent authority in the Board before incurring any expenditure, even within the sanctioned budget. Postings and transfers of all staff positions in the Correspondence Unit are done by the Secretary himself. The appointments of evaluators of students' response sheet assignments, writers of students' response sheets and contact teachers for the contact

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programme are also decided by him.. All schemes of students, schemes of examinations and syllabi for the correspondence students are prescribed by the Board through its various committees. The Assistant Director and the Academic Wing are normally not involved in these matters.

#### 1.12 Financial Position

As the matters stand, the correspondence unit is self-financing. Not only that, there seems to be an annual saving to the order of about 25% of the total f .s collected from the students. The savings are pooled in the general fund of the Board.

In the next section are given the findings based mainly on responses obtained from the students in the sample.

## FINDINGS (B)

### 1. Students

It was of interest to know the socio-economic characteristics of the students enrolled in the correspondence course at the higher secondary level (class XI) offered by the Board. The findings in this respect are presented in Sections 1.1. to 1.8.

#### 1.1 Sex

Almost all the respondents were males. Hardly two per cent of the respondents were females (Table 1).

Table 1: Sex-wise distribution of the respondents

Males	Females	Total
444	7	451
(98)	(2)	(100)*

A small percentage of females among the respondents is understandable. Girl students who themselves or whose guardians do not pay income tax are exempted from going through the correspondence course for appearing privately in the higher secondary examination.

\*Figures in the parentheses in the above table and in the subsequent tables are percentages .



### 1.2. Age

There was no upper age limit for entry to the correspondence course. This was a welcome feature as it could facilitate persons to carry on with their education at their otherwise 'post school' age. The study also showed that about 28 and seven per cent of the respondents were in the age groups of 20 - 25 and 26 -40 years respectively (Table 2).

Table 2: Age-wise distribution of the respondents

Age Groups (Years)							
Below 17	17 - 20	21-25	26-30	31-40	Above 40	Not replied	Total
24	265	126	20	13	12	2	451
(5)	(59)	(28)	(4)	(3)	(.5)	(.5)	(100)

However, a majority of the students were below 20 years. It was further observed that science and commerce students were of younger age compared to arts students.

### 1.3. Marital Status

It was observed that about one third of the respondents were married. Comparatively, a higher percentage (40%) of arts students were married as against about 20% students in each Commerce and Science faculties (Table 3).

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Table 3: Marital Status of the respondents

Faculties	Number and percentage of students			
	Married	Unmarried	Not replied	Total
Science	12 ( 21 )	43 ( 77 )	1 ( 2 )	56 ( 100 )
Commerce	29 ( 19 )	123 ( 81 )	- ( )	152 ( 100 )
Arts	110 ( 45 )	131 ( 54 )	2 ( 1 )	243 ( 100 )
Total	151 ( 33 )	297 ( 66 )	3 ( 1 )	451 ( 100 )

#### 1.4 Location of Residence

It was observed that about 52% of the respondents belonged to rural areas (Table 4).

Table 4: Distribution of students according to location of residence:

Faculty	Number and percentage of respondents			
	Rural	Urban	Not replied	Total
Science	18 ( 32 )	37 ( 66 )	1 ( 2 )	56 ( 100 )
Commerce	55 ( 36 )	97 ( 64 )	- ( )	152 ( 100 )
Arts	162 ( 66 )	81 ( 34 )	1 ( )	243 ( 100 )
Total	235 ( 52 )	215 ( 48 )	1 ( - )	451 ( 100 )

That quite a good percentage of ruralities took advantage of correspondence courses was heartening to observe.

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### 1.5. Caste

About 24% of the respondents belonged to scheduled and backward classes. Here too, a higher percentage (30%) of arts students belonged to scheduled and backward classes compared to commerce and science students (16% each).

### 1.6. Employment Status

Correspondence education is of special value to persons who are working, and cannot afford to attend school on full time basis. The study showed that about 34% of the respondents were employed and another about 14% were apprentices (Table 5).

Table 5: Employment status of the respondents

Faculty	Number and percentage of students				Total
	Employed	Apprentices (with or without stipend)	Unemployed	Not replied	
Science	11 (20)	7 (13)	35 (62)	3 (5)	56 (100)
Commerce	44 (29)	27 (17)	75 (50)	6 (4)	152 (100)
Arts	98 (41)	25 (10)	99 (40)	21 (9)	243 (100)
Total	153 (34)	59 (14)	209 (46)	30 (6)	451 (100)

It may be seen that a larger percentage of arts students were working persons compared to science and commerce students.

### 1.7. Time lag

As many as 45% of the respondents reported that there was a time lag between their leaving a regular school and

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Joining the correspondence course. In a majority of those cases (84%) the time lag was upto five years, but in a few cases it was as large as 17 years.

The time lag was more pronounced and greater in length in case of arts students.

#### 1.8. Previous academic achievement

It was observed that about 45% of the respondents had taken the higher secondary examination of the Board earlier also, but failed and wanted to retake the examination.

Among the different faculties, as many as 86% of science students were such as had failed once in the higher secondary examination, as against 42% and 36% of the commerce and arts students respectively.

It was observed that on the whole arts students were distinctly different from science and commerce students in many respects. Comparatively, a greater percentage of arts students were older in age, married, employed and ruralities, belonged to scheduled and backward classes and had a bigger gap between leaving a regular school and joining the correspondence course. On the other hand, a majority of the science students had once failed in the higher secondary examination in the Board, and wanted to re-take the examination. This information may be helpful in planning a strategy for teaching students of different faculties through correspondence.

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## 2. Reasons for Taking Correspondence Courses

On the basis of the previous research study, and study of literature, ten reasons for going in for correspondence education were identified. The respondents were asked to tick (✓) against the reasons(s) that applied to them. They could also mention other reasons, if any. The reasons that emerged are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Reasons for joining the correspondence course

Sl.No.	Reasons	Frequency and percentage of mention (N = 451)	
1.	I am employed	150	(33)
2.	I am on apprenticeship	51	(11)
3.	I am seeking employment	111	(25)
4.	I have to attend to house-hold chores	84	(19)
5.	Admission was not available in a regular school	160	(35)
6.	I am of 'post-school' age, and feel embarrassed attending a school	30	(7)
7.	Parents/husband do not favour my attending a regular school	25	(5)
8.	There is no regular high school in the neighbourhood	10	(2)
9.	I am disabled/handicapped	10	(2)
10.	Going through correspondence course is a time-saving device	9	(2)
11.	Not replied	11	(2)

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Some respondents mentioned more than one reason for joining the course.

It may be seen that economic reasons were the most predominant. As many as 88% of the respondents reported that they did not attend a regular school because either they were already working or were apprentices or were seeking employment or could not be taken away from the household chores.

The next most important reason in case of 35% of the respondents was that admission was not available in a regular school. May be because either they had failed in the higher secondary examination, and were drop-outs after having passed the secondary examination.

Another two per cent of the respondents mentioned that there was no regular high school in the neighbourhood. Yet another five per cent respondents said that their parents/husband did not favour their attending a regular school.

About two per cent respondents were disabled and handicapped

Implicit in these and other similar reasons is a suggestion that most of the respondents were disadvantaged in one way or the other, and could not have carried on with their regular schooling on that account. Education through the correspondence education came in handy to them to improve their educational qualifications.

### 3. Lesson Materials

#### 3.1 Choice of Optional subjects

As mentioned earlier, each candidate has to offer English

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and Hindi as compulsory subjects, and three other optional subjects under the Arts, the commerce or the Science group, as the case may be. It was of interest to know which of the optional subjects were more popular with the correspondence students of different faculties. The position that emerged in this respect is shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Choice of optional subjects by the respondents

Faculty	Optional Subjects	number and % age of respondents		Remarks
1. Science	Chemistry	56	(100)	Correspondence lessons are available in all subjects.
	Physics	56	(100)	
	Mathematics	43	(77)	
	Biology	13	(23)	
2. Commerce	Book keeping	152	(100)	Correspondence lessons are not available in typing
	Commercial Pract-ice	152	(100)	
	Banking	96	(63)	
	Commercial Geography	24	(16)	
	Economics	5	(3)	
	Typing (Hindi&English)	27	(18)	
3. Arts	Civics	216	(89)	Correspondence lessons are not available in geography, drawing, Urdu, Panjabi and Rajasthani literature.
	Advanced Hindi	166	(68)	
	Economics	139	(57)	
	History	127	(52)	
	Sanskrit	40	(16)	
	Geography	23	(9)	
	Drawing	7	(3)	
	Urdu	4	(2)	
	Punjabi	1	(.5)	
	Rajasthan literature	1	(.5)	

It may be seen that some optional subjects were more popular with the respondents than other subjects. It may be further seen that correspondence lessons were not available

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on all subjects offered by the students. The students offering these subjects have to make their own arrangements for the study materials. This seems unfair to the correspondence students, particularly to the rural students who may not have easy access to books and may feel lost without any sort of easily understandable reading materials.

When asked, the academic staff responsible for the production of lesson materials explained that the correspondence unit was handicapped to produce lessons on all subjects due to shortage of staff. It was reported that the strength of staff was too small even to get lessons written from the outside resource persons.

### 3.2. Preparation of Lessons

It was observed that course content in each subject was generally divided in two papers. For the purpose of preparing correspondence lessons, each paper was further sub-divided into about 16 units (the range being 13 - 16 units depending upon the quantum of content). The break down of the course content of various subjects in different lesson units was decided by the Lecturer in the concerned faculty of the Correspondence Unit of the Board. There were no Expert Committee to advise on this.

The lessons were written sometime back. Every year the same lesson materials are reprinted afresh. However, the Lecturers at their level revise and edit the materials every year before sending them to the press. The editing was mostly done to correct printing mistakes, remove factual inaccuracies and



up-date the figures. Basically, style, format and content remained the same. Since it was not a practice with the Board to engage resource persons for over all revision and editing of the lessons, and since there was a small faculty of three whole-time lecturer only in the correspondence Unit, nothing more than this could perhaps be expected.

The writing of lessons for correspondence is a specialised job. The style, the format and the language of the instructional materials has to be different from the text book so as to make them self-instructional. The Board had not done much on its own to train writers for writing correspondence lessons. However, the Board took advantage of a programme of the Centre for Educational Technology (NCERT) for training of correspondence lesson writers of the Boards of Secondary Education. In two separate workshops organised in Ajmer under the programme in 1977-78, the three members of the Faculty and about 85 other lesson writers were trained in writing lessons in respect of most of the subjects. All subjects offered by the Board at the Higher Secondary level could not be taken up in the training programme.

It was felt that even within the subjects covered during the training programme, number of writers trained was not enough to meet the requirement of the Board. There is, perhaps, a need to take up training of lesson writers on a continuous basis on part of the Board so as to create a pool of sufficient number of <sup>trained</sup> writers in each subject.

After some writers were trained in the training programmes mentioned above, the Board decided to re-write lessons in some subjects making use of the newly created talent. The procedure adopted by the Board in writing of new lessons was as follows:

The writer was assigned to write a set of four consecutive lessons, and one reviewer to review the materials written by two writers. There were thus four lesson writers ( or framers) and two reviewers for each paper in a subject, and eight lesson writers and four reviewers for each subject.

A meeting of the lesson writers and the reviewers was called to decide upon the scope and content of each lesson unit.

This was followed by one-day orientation of the lesson writers and that of the reviewers to refresh their understanding of lesson writing of correspondence.

Each writer wrote his assignment independently, and sent it to the concerned reviewer. The reviewers also worked independently of each other. The complete manuscript of all lessons in each subject was vetted by the concerned lecturer in the Correspondence Unit to see that there is continuity from one lesson to another and there is no duplication of ideas. In case a particular lesson was found lacking, it was referred back to the concerned reviewer to revise it.

The above account shows that the writer, the reviewer and the vetter worked almost independently of each other in preparing the lessons. Some correspondence institutions, on the other hand, adopt team approach to prepare the lessons and find it more fruitful.

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It was further observed that there was no provision to try out the materials on the students before finalising them.

It was understood that the lessons written after the training programme reflect new techniques of self-instructional materials. This is a step in the right direction. There is, however, a need to work out a system for regular evaluation of the materials, and to obtain feed-back from the students for continuous improvement of the materials. At present, this seems to be lacking.

### 3.3. Number of Lesson Units in one Consignment

The number of lesson units despatched at a time to students varied from subject to subject. Normally, three lesson units were sent at a time in English and Hindi, and as many lesson units in each of the two papers of three optional subjects. In all, 24 lesson units were despatched in each consignment, as detailed below:-

English        -        3 lesson units

Hindi                3        "

Three optional  
subjects

(2 papers each)

3 x 2 x 3	<u>18</u>	"
	24	"

Lesson materials were despatched 4 - 5 times during the year depending on the subjects offered by the students.

#### 5.4 Despatch of Lessons

The respondents were asked as to when did they receive first consignment of lesson materials. The picture which emerged in this respect is shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Month in which respondents received first consignment of lesson materials

Number and percentage of respondents						
Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Not replied	Total
22	94	177	64	22	72	151
(5)	(21)	(39)	(44)	(5)	(16)	(100)

It may be seen that most of the respondents received first consignment of reading materials in October. This allows them a time span of about five months to complete the course. Some respondents received it as late as in the month of December. Against this, a regular student completes the same course in nine to ten months. Otherwise also, correspondence students have to study by themselves, which is more time consuming, and those who are working persons find still less time. There is a need to devise ways to enable correspondence students to gain more time to study and to complete the course.

One way could be to commence enrolment in the correspondence course soon after the Board declare results of their Secondary Examination, which is sometime at the end of June or beginning of July. Also, the entire process of enrolment and admission may

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be managed in such a manner that a student, if found eligible, gets first despatch of lessons within 15 days of the receipt of his/her application for enrolment by the Board. Despatch of first consignment of the lessons need not wait till the last date of the receipt of application forms.

Apart from these measures to allow more time to correspondence students to complete the course, the flexibility in the scheme of examination as recommended by the Working Group on Correspondence Education set up by the Board in 1979 may also be considered. The group felt that the correspondence students might be offered the option to clear the Higher Secondary Examination in two annual terms, if they so desired.

The data collection work commenced in early March. It was expected that all respondents might have received the entire lot of reading materials by that time. When asked, only 34% of the respondents reported receipt of full complement of lesson materials. Another 20% did not know whether the reading materials they had received was all, or some more was in store for them. As many as 43% of the respondents said that they expected some more consignments of the reading materials.

### 3.5. Interval between Consignments

were the students in a position to study properly all the reading materials by the time next consignment of lessons arrived? They were asked whether they could do it conveniently or had to

work hard to do it or found it difficult to cope with it.

The responses obtained in this respect are tabulated in Table 9.

Table 9: Convenience to study reading materials by the time next despatch of materials arrived.

Sl.No.	Responses	Number and percentage of respondents
1.	Can do it conveniently	175 (39)
2.	Have to work hard	162 (35)
3.	Find it difficult	97 (21)
4.	Not replied	17 (4)
<u>Total</u>		<u>451 (100)</u>

Altogether, about 57% of the respondents could not properly study the lesson materials by the time next despatch of lessons arrived. It was further observed that science students found it more difficult to complete the reading of study materials than arts and commerce students. This points towards a need of devising ways of increasing span of time between enrolment in the course and final examination, and spreading the despatch of lessons more evenly and regularly over the period.

### 3.6. Help sought from Books

The prospectus of the Board suggests a list of text books for the higher Secondary Examination. Did the students read the books, and other reading materials such as 'Notes' and 'digests' in addition to the correspondence lessons?

As many as 79% of the respondents replied in affirmative. There was not much difference on this account among respondents of arts, science and commerce groups as is evident from Table 10.

Table 10: Help sought from additional reading materials

Sl. No.	Faculty	Number and percentage of respondents			Total
		Yes	No	not replied	
1.	Science	45 (80)	10 (18)	1 (2)	56
2.	Commerce	111 (73)	41 (27)	-	152
3.	Arts	119 (82)	40 (16)	4 (2)	243
Total		355 (79)	92 (20)	5 (1)	451

The respondents who reported reading of additional materials were further asked to indicate the subjects in which they referred to those materials.

Among Science faculty, additional reading materials in respect of Mathematics, Physics, English and Chemistry in that order were more popular with the respondents.

The additional reading materials in respect of English subject were the most popular with both Commerce and Arts students.

Other subjects mentioned in this regard by the Commerce students were Book Keeping, Commercial Geography, Hindi, Banking and Commercial Practice in that order.

In case of Arts students, these were Advanced Hindi, History, Civics, Economics and Hindi in that order.

### 3.7. Help sought from other Persons

It was of further interest to know whether students sought help of some persons (other than teachers in the contact programme) in their studies or were able to manage by themselves.

The responses obtained in this respect are tabulated in Table 11.

Table 11: Dependence of students on other persons in their studies

Sl.No.	Faculty	<u>number and percentage of respondents</u>			Total
		Yes	No	Not replied	
1. Science		26 (46)	29 (50)	2 (4)	56
2. Commerce		94 (62)	130 (37)	2 (1)	152
3. Arts		106 (44)	130 (53)	7 (3)	243
Total		226 (50)	214 (48)	11 (2)	451

On an average, about half of the respondents sought help of other persons in their studies. Interestingly, commerce students depended more on personal coaching than science and art students.

The respondents who sought help from other persons were further asked to indicate the subjects in which they needed personal coaching. The trends were similar to as in case of dependence on



additional reading materials. The reasons of the respondents for greater dependence on additional reading materials and personal coaching in some subjects than in others could not be ascertained. It, however, points towards a need of diagnosing difficulties of the students in the subjects mentioned by them, and providing them with suitable help by way of bridge courses, and revising the existing materials so as to make them more comprehensive and easily understandable.

### 3.8. Opinion about the Lesson Materials

Opinion of the respondents was obtained about four aspects of the correspondence lessons. These were: level of difficulty, size of the typed letters, extent of printing mistakes and accuracy of information. Responses with regard to each of these aspects are separately discussed as under:-

#### 3.8.1 Level of difficulty

Opinion of the respondents in this respect differed with regard to different subjects. Lesson materials in respect of some subjects were considered more difficult than those of others. The subjects which were considered difficult by more than 25% of the respondents are listed in Table 12.

Table 12: Lesson Materials mentioned as difficult

Sl.No.	Subjects	Percentage of mention
1.	English	51
2.	Book keeping	40
3.	Mathematics	35
4.	Physics	32
5.	Sanskrit	28
6.	Advanced Hindi	26

### 3.8.2 Size of Typed Letters

There were no complaints on this score. Almost all the respondents (96%) felt satisfaction so far as the size of type letters of the lesson materials is concerned.

### 3.8.3 Printing Mistakes

The picture, however, was not as encouraging in respect of opinion of the respondents with regard to printing mistakes in the lesson materials. About 37% of the respondents felt that there were printing mistakes to a more or less extent (Table 13). More of science students than commerce and arts students mentioned about the printing mistakes.

Table 13: Opinion about the extent of printing mistakes

Many Mistakes	Some Mistakes	Largely Correct	Not replied	Total
8	165	262	16	451
(2)	(37)	(58)	(3)	(100)

It was observed that in this connection the Board did not have a printing press of its own. All India tenders were invited afresh every year for printing of correspondence lessons. Proof reading was done first by a proof reader (there are three trained proof readers in the unit) and then by the concerned lecturer. The press was usually <sup>not</sup>asked to send the second proof (partly because of lack of time) which may largely account for printing mistakes not being completely removed.\*

It was understood that since then there is <sup>a</sup>greater insistence on the second proof. \*

### 3.9 Suggestions about Lesson Materials

Finally, through an open ended question, the respondents were asked to give their suggestions about improving the lesson materials. In all, 301 students (67%) responded. The responses are summarised in Table 14.

Table 14: Respondents' suggestions for improving lesson materials

Sl.No.	Suggestions	number and percentage of respondents (n = 167)
<u>1. Despatch of Materials</u>		
(i)	Despatch of lessons should be more timely and systematic.	135 (45)
<u>2. Preparation of Lessons</u>		
(i)	Material should be more simple and detailed giving suitable examples.	120 (40)
(ii)	Lessons on all subjects should be prepared	46 (15)
(iii)	Essay type questions given at the end of the lessons should be similar to those asked in the final examination.	31 (10)
(iv)	There should be additional notes giving synopsis of model answers to important questions.	22 (7)
<u>3. Printing of Materials</u>		
(i)	Printing mistakes should be avoided	19 (6)
(ii)	Quality of printing should be improved	15 (5)

It may be seen that bulk of the suggestions were with regard to despatch and preparation of lesson materials.

Regarding despatch of lessons, it was stressed that the lessons should be sent timely. Advancing this suggestion, most respondents added:-

"Our final examination is round the corner, but we have not yet received lessons".

"All reading materials should be in the hands of the students at least two months before the commencement of the final examination"

"There is no post-office in our village. It takes 10 - 15 days, and sometimes a month for the mail to reach us. It is essential that the Board should despatch the lessons timely".

"Last year, some of my friends received the last instalment of lessons just two days before the final examination".

The other part of the suggestion was that the despatch of lessons should be more systematic. Some of the comments made in this regard were as under:

"In the last consignment, lessons on History were missing, while those on Civics were in duplicate,"

"I have not received maps, which should be with History lessons".

"Sometimes, I receive lessons in wrong subjects".

"At times, we receive consignment of lessons one after the other in quick succession. At other times, we don't receive anything for a long time".

The next group of suggestions were with regard to preparation of lessons. Among these, the most frequently mentioned suggestion was that the lessons should be written in a simpler language and in a more detailed fashion giving suitable examples. Most

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respondents supported their suggestion by referring specifically to English lessons. . They particularly referred to lessons in Grammar, which they said, were not easily understandable to them. In the matter of Hindi, some respondents brought out that 'Dohas', 'chands', 'Alankars' and grammar should be explained in a more simple and explicit manner.

That English was considered relatively more difficult by the respondents has come out in response to another question also, as reported earlier.

Some of the commonly stated general comments with regard to a need of more detailed lessons were as under:-

"During the course of study of lessons, students are asked to refer to books for complete information.\* Now this is not fair. Students pay for the correspondence lessons. Over and above, this, they are supposed to buy books as well. This additional expenditure hits the poor students harder. Those who cannot afford to buy books at all do not expect to secure good grades in the examination. The correspondence lessons should be self-contained".

"To add to the injury, more than one book is prescribed for a subject. In History, the Board have prescribed seven books for two papers. This makes it difficult to choose. There should be definite recommendations for a particular book(s)."

"Lessons don't cover all what is prescribed in the syllabus. We have to study books as well, for questions in the final examination are mostly based on the text given in the books".

"Answers to some questions given at the end of the lessons are not available in the text of the lessons".

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\*Hindi 'Dohas', Sanskrit 'Shlokas' are given in parts only and has to refer to books for their complete appraisal.

The respondents want not only that the lessons should be more understandable but would also like it better if questions at the end of the lessons are given in a manner as they appear in the final examination. Some respondents suggested that there should be additional notes giving synopsis of model answers to important questions.

In short, respondents would like the lessons to be self-contained, sufficient in themselves to prepare them for the final examination.

Some respondents mentioned about a need to correct printing mistakes in the lesson materials and to improve the quality of printing.

"Some pages are so badly printed that they are not readable" some respondents commented.

#### 4. Students' Response Sheet Assignments (RSAs)

The Board offers the services of evaluating and correcting students' response sheet assignments, and sending them back to the students for their self-improvement in learning the subject matter. Through the corrected assignments, the students are also guided as how to answer in the examination. Apart from writing answers to questions, students are free to raise their doubts and point out their difficulties in learning the subject matter. This too is supposed to be clarified by the Board. Submission of assignments is, however, not compulsory on part of the students, and performance of the students in the assignments is not given weightage in the final results.

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Students themselves bear the postal expenses for sending assignments to the Board. They are not aware of the postal concessions that could be available to them if they write 'Pupils' Exercise for Correction vide PO Guide No.114(B)I' on the parcel. However, the Board bear the postal expenses for returning the corrected assignments to the students.

At the end of each lesson, there is a test for recapitulation. The tests are of two types - one for self-evaluation and the other for external evaluation. The self-evaluation tests contain self-check questions only. Key to the questions is given in the lessons in the next instalment, so that students may compare their answers and evaluate their performance on their own.

The alternate lessons contain tests for external evaluation. The last test for external evaluation appears at the end of 12th lesson in each paper. There are thus six Students' Response Sheet Assignments' in each paper. The last test is designed to recapitulate all the previous lessons. The questions in the external evaluation tests are of various types - multiple choice, short answers, essay type etc.

The prospectus of the Higher Secondary Correspondence Course, which is made available to students along with the application form for enrolment, mentions that the students are expected to submit 50% of the total assignments in each paper, and that they should submit assignments within 15 days of the

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receipt of lesson materials by them. With the first instalment of the lessons, a leaflet is also sent reminding the students about the desirability of writing and submitting the assignments, and telling them about the requirements in respect of number and schedule of submitting the assignments. These are the only two occasions and methods of making the students aware of the facility offered by the Board of evaluating students' assignments for their benefit.

#### 4.1. Awareness about and Submission of Assignments

Were the students aware of the facility offered by the Board of evaluating their assignments? Did the students submit the assignments and if so, to what extent? Responses to these questions are tabulated as under:-

Table 15: Submission of Response Sheet Assignments

Sl.No.	Response	number and percentage of respondents	
1.	RSAs submitted in all subjects	92	(20)
2.	Submitted in some subjects	79	(17)
3.	Not submitted	225	(50)
4.	not aware	26	( 8)
5.	not replied	29	( 7)
Total		451	

It was observed that a majority of the students knew about the facility offered by the Board of evaluating their assignments.

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However, only 20% of the respondents availed themselves of this facility in respect of all subjects, and another 17% in respect of some subjects.

The students are expected to submit the assignments within 15 days of the receipt of lessons by them. The month-wise flow of submission of assignments on part of the students could not be ascertained from the records available with the Board. Nor the percentage of students who submitted the assignments and percentage of assignments submitted in each subject could be ascertained from the Board. However, from the expenditure incurred by the Board in respect of evaluation of students' assignments, it was estimated that about 25% of the total assignments were submitted by the students. This corresponds to some extent with the findings reported in the Table 15 above.

#### 4.2. Return of RSAs

For evaluating RSAs, the Board maintains a panel of evaluators in each subject. They are teachers having a teaching experience of at least five years in a particular subject. The interested teachers apply to the Board for appointment as evaluators. A panel is formed by the Assistant Director of Correspondence Unit on the basis of bio-data provided by the applicants subject to approval by the Secretary of the Board. The evaluators on the panel are usually changed after a term of three years, and can be reappointed after a lapse of two years.

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The fee prescribed by the Board is Rs.0.70 for evaluating an assignment. About 150 - 200 students are allotted to each evaluator for a particular subject. All assignments in that subject submitted by these students are referred to the same evaluator. This enables the evaluators to keep a record of the number and percentage of assignments submitted by a student. The evaluators send the record to the Board at the end of the year. But then it is, perhaps, too late to remind the defaulters. It was learnt that the Board had not register the information about the number and frequency of assignments submitted by each student before sending the assignments to the evaluators.

The academic staff of the Correspondence Unit are also entrusted with evaluation of students' assignments; each member of the faculty is allotted twice the number of students compared to the outside evaluators. Some assignments are received late at the end of the year. These are also evaluated by the concerned members of the faculty.

The evaluators are expected to return the corrected assignments to the Board within 15 days of their receipt by them. The Board in turn return these to the concerned students.

The students who reported to have submitted the assignments were further asked whether they had received back all or part of the corrected assignments from the Board. Their responses in this respect may be seen in Table 16.

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Table 16: Receipt of corrected RSAs on part of the respondents

Sl.No.	Receipt of corrected assignments	Number and %age of respondents (N = 171)	
1.	All	39	(23)
2.	Some	72	(42)
3.	None	29	(17)
4.	Not replied	31	(18)
Total		171	(100)

The study was conducted at the fag end of the year.

The table shows that only 23% of the respondents who had submitted the assignments received them back. As many as 42% received only part of the assignments, and another 17% did not hear anything from the Board in this respect.

#### 4.3. Evaluation of Assignments

The evaluators are obliged not only to assign marks to the answers but also to comment on each answer with a view to help students improve upon their performance.

So far as the findings of the present study go, 20% of the respondents, who had received back all of part of the assignments, reported that evaluators did not comment on the answers written by them. (Table 17);

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Table 17: Comments of evaluators on RSAs

Sl.No.	Evaluators' Comments	Number and percentage of respondents (N = 111)	
1.	Comments on all assignments	26	(23)
2.	Comments on some assignments	58	(52)
3.	No comments, marks only	22	(20)
4.	Not replied	5	( 5)
Total		111	(100)

It may be seen that 58% of the respondents, who received back the assignments found comments of the evaluators on some assignments. Only 23% of the respondents reported to have received comments in all cases.

It may be mentioned that a copy of a cyclostyled instructions specifying the manner in which students' assignments are to be evaluated is given to the evaluators in the beginning. Beyond this, no formal training is imparted to the evaluators in the techniques of evaluating the assignments.

The members of the faculty of the Correspondence Unit are supposed to do a sample checking of the corrected assignments before these are returned to the students, and to refer them back to the concerned evaluators, if found lacking. It was, however, observed that the practice of sample checking was not on a strong footing, as more often than not the administration despatched the corrected sheets directly to the students without referring them first to the faculty.

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#### 4.4 Usefulness of comments

All those who reported receipt of comments of evaluators on their assignments were further asked to indicate whether they found the comments helpful and if so, to what extent. It was encouraging to note that 55% of these respondents were happy with the comments. Another 37% of the respondents said that the comments were only somewhat helpful.

The above account with regard to evaluators' comments shows that the problem lies not so much with regard to the quality of comments as with regard to giving comments on most of students' assignments.

#### 4.5. Suggestions for Improving RSAs

In all, 100 respondents (40%) advanced suggestions for improving the effectiveness of RSAs programme. These are summarised as under:-

Table 18: Suggestions for improving effectiveness of RSAs programme

S l . N o	Suggestions	number and frequency of mention (N=180)
1.	RSAs should be returned promptly	83 (46)
2.	RSAs should contain concrete comments.	77 (43)
3.	The questions should be examination oriented.	70 (39)
4.	15-day time limit for submission of RSAs should be increased	27 (15)
5.	Submission of RSAs should be compulsory on part of all students.	23 (13)
6.	Lessons should be sent in time and at regular intervals to enable the students to submit RSAs in time	20 (11)
7.	Students should be made aware of the facility of evaluation of RSAs.	18 (10)
8.	Space for writing answers should be adequate	18 (10)
9.	Postage for sending the RSAs should be borne by the Board.	15 (8)

Most respondents desired that teacher marked assignments (TMAs) should be returned to them, and returned promptly. There was a feeling among the respondents that they did not receive TMAs for quite some time after submitting them. At times, these were not received at all. Some of the comments in this respect make an interesting reading.

"I think my RSAs are lost. I have not received them back from the Board".

"I have not received any of the corrected RSAs so far".

"So far I have received only one against four RSAs submitted by me".

"The Board take a lot of time in returning the corrected RSAs to the students. These should be sent to the students in time so that they may take advantage of the comments offered by the evaluators".

"The benefits of the programme of RSAs are limited because not all corrected RSAs are received by the students".

Another equally important suggestion was that the evaluators should give such concrete comments as may be helpful to the students in improving their programmes.

In fact, a number of respondents made the two suggestions mentioned above simultaneously i.e prompt return of the TMAs and giving of concrete comments on part of the evaluators.

Some of the specific comments made in respect of the latter suggestion were as under:-

"Evaluators just strike the wrong answers, but don't guide about the correct answers".

"If our answers are wrong, the Board should write the correct answers, and send them to us".

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"not only constructive criticism should be given, but correct answers should also be supplied to us.

Some respondents commented that the Board should supply model answers to some important questions in each subject for the benefit of the students along with the TMAs.

It was gathered that at one time there had been a definite thinking in the Board about the preparation of model answers and sending them to the students, but this had not been implemented (probably, due to small faculty in the correspondence unit).

Another about 40% of the suggestions were with regard to type of questions in the assignments. Respondents desired that questions in the assignments should be as they appear in the final examination. The respondents felt that this would give them a practice in writing for the final examination.

About 11% of the respondents opined that if lessons are regularly supplied and also in time to the students, this should improve the frequency of the submission of RSAs.

"Students don't send RSAs either because the lessons are not received regularly or these are difficult to understand" commented a respondent.

"Only five days are left for the examination, but I have not received all lessons in English" - yet another student remarked in this connection.

"Answers to some questions in the RSAs are not to be found in the text of the lessons" - a respondent observed.

Making all the students aware of the facility offered by the Board of evaluation RSAs was another important suggestion to promote this programme.

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True, mention to this effect is made in the prospectus. But the possibility that the students, by and large, may overlook it cannot be ruled out. It would be a good idea if each assignment carries an additional note reminding students about TSAs.

Among various suggestions one that deserves careful consideration (even though made by only 8% the respondents only) is that the Board should pay for the postage in respect of the assignments mailed by the students. It would be worthwhile to try the suggestion of the payee paying the postage to see if it promotes the submission of assignments on part of a larger number of students. May be some students, particularly those from poor families and backward areas, were deterred to send assignments on account of extra expenses involved on postage or difficult availability of postage facilities. If need be, the Board may suitably enhance the tuition fee to cover the extra expenses on postage.

##### 5. Personal Contact Programme (PCP)

The Board arrange personal contact programme for the correspondence students once a year for a period of ten days at different centres spread all over the state of Rajasthan. The idea is to resolve difficulties of academic nature of the students by providing them with personal coaching. Attending the contact programme is not compulsory on part of the students.

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### 5.1. PCP and its utilisation

It was of interest to know what percentage of students took advantage of the contact programme during the year 1981-82. The responses are summarised in Table 19.

Table 19: Utilisation of PCP

Sl.No.	Whether PCP attended	No. and percentage of respondents	
1.	Yes, for all the 10 days	22	(5)
2.	Yes, but for part of the time	21	(5)
3.	No, I knew about . but could not make it.	282	(62)
4.	No, I was not aware of the programme	85	(19)
5.	Not replied	41	( 9)
Total		451	(100)

It may be seen that only 5% of the respondents attended the 10-day contact programme for the full term; another 5% attended it for part of the days.

The records available with the Board also showed that only about 740 students (nearly 6%) attended the contact programme during the year 1981-82. This figure corresponds nearly with the findings of the present study.

It was observed that a circular is sent to the students communicating the duration, dates, time and places of the contact programme. The students are free to attend the centre of their

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choice. In fact, the students are required to give their tentative choice of the contact centre in the application for enrolment itself. List of the centres is given in the prospectus sent along with the application form. Despite this, as Table 19 shows, about one fifth of the respondents were not aware of the programme. It points towards a need to take some more steps to make the contact programme a common knowledge among the participants.

## 5.2. Utility of PCP

Through another question, the respondents, who had attended the contact programme, were further asked to indicate whether they found the programme helpful in learning the subjects, and if so to what extent. Their responses are summarised in Table 20.

Table 20: Opinion of respondents regarding utility of PCP

Sl. No.	Utility of the Programme	Number and %age of respondents ( N = 43 )	
1.	Beneficial in learning all subjects	13	(30)
2.	Beneficial in learning some subjects	25	(58)
3.	Not beneficial	3	(7)
4.	Not replied	2	(5)
Total		43	(100)

It was observed that most of the respondents (88%) who attended the programme found it beneficial in learning all or some of the subjects. Seven per cent of these respondents did not find it helpful.

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Since the number of respondents who attended the programme was small, further analysis of their responses regarding specific subjects the learning of which improved as a result of attending the contact programme was abandoned.

### 5.3. Suggestions for Improving the PCP

Finally, the respondents were asked to give their suggestions for improving the contact programme. In all, 143 respondents (32%) gave their suggestions. Salient ones are recorded in Table 21.

Table 21.: Suggestions for improving PCP

Sl.no.	Suggestions	Frequency of mention
<u>Time and Duration of PCP</u>		
1.	It should be held more than once and if to be held once, that should be near the examination.	26 (18)
2.	Duration should be increased	37 (26)
<u>Number of PCP Centres</u>		
3.	Number of centres should be increased so that these are nearer to the places of residence of students	83 (58)
<u>Information about PCP</u>		
4.	Students should be informed about the programme well in time and motivated to attend it.	28 (20)
<u>Selection of Subjects</u>		
5.	Only important topics in difficult subjects like English, Advanced Hindi should be taken up.	17 (12)
<u>Selection of teachers</u>		
6.	Only experienced and knowledgeable teachers should be selected	8 (6)
<u>Other suggestions</u>		
7.	Students should not be charged additional fees for the PCP	4 (3)

The two most important suggestions were with regard to increase in the number of contact centres and increase in the duration of the contact programme.

Regarding number of contact centres, it may be mentioned that during 1981-82, contact programme was arranged at 16 centres in the state. The centres, which were located at the district headquarters/<sup>only</sup> operated in the secondary/higher secondary schools of the state directorate of education. Since there are 26 districts, some contact centres covered more than one district. It meant long distances for some students to reach the contact centres. This might have been particularly deterrent to poor students as the students were required to travel at their cost (no railway concession being available to them), and also to bear expenses on lodging and boarding for attending the contact programme. This is reflected in the comments of the respondents, as/<sup>re</sup>produced below:-

"Only students from well-off families can afford to attend the programme. This is not for the poor".

"Some sort of railway concession and availability of other facilities will encourage greater participation in the programme on part of the students".

"The nearest contact centre is 205 Kms away. I could not afford expenses to reach it".

"There should be a contact centre within about 50Kms of the reach of a student. Contact centres should be set up in all the examination centres, or at least at all the Tehsil Headquarters".

It appeared that selection of districts for setting up centres, and the decision regarding number of centres in each

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District was done ad-hoc. Analysis of data regarding concentration of students in different parts of the state for the year 1981-82 was not available with the Board. Nor had the Board decided upon definite norms for setting up a Centre in terms of number of students putting up in a particular locality.

Regarding duration and time of the contact programme the specific suggestions were that it should be held for about 20 days, and near the final examination.

It may be mentioned that the contact programme was held during autumn vacations when schools were closed for regular students. By this time, correspondence students receive only 2 - 3 despatches of correspondence lessons comprising of about 6 - 9 lessons in each paper. It is, perhaps, with this in mind that the respondents suggested that the programme should be held later near the final examination (winter vacations) when the students would have received and read most of the reading materials. Another suggestion related to this was that instead of ten-day duration, the contact programme should be for 20 days.

In this connection, some respondents also suggested that the programme should be held twice, once during .. autumn vacations and then during winter vacations, each time for ten days.

"The Programme at the contact centres should be organised both in the afternoon and in the forenoon, so that more students may be able to attend it" - was another suggestion in this regard.

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As many as 20 per cent of the respondents felt that making the students aware of the contact programme in time will enhance its popularity.

"The students should be made aware of the dates and time of the contact programme at least one month in advance so that they may adjust their schedule accordingly" - one respondent commented.

Some respondents (12%) suggested that only important topics in some difficult subjects such as English, Advanced Hindi etc should be dealt with during the contact programme. In other words, the respondents wanted that instead of spreading the programme over all subjects, a selective approach, based on diagnosis of the topics, which students find difficult to comprehend by themselves, may be adopted.

Perhaps, there is also a need to streamline the procedure for selection of teachers as pointed out by about six per cent of the respondents.

"I attended the programme for some days. I found that the teachers did not take much interest. May be because the strength of the students attending the programme was not much. Anyway, I left the programme in between".

"The teachers don't turn up in the classes in time. They should be more punctual".

It was observed that the headmasters of the schools selected for setting up the contact centres themselves selected the contact teachers. Each contact teacher was obliged to take two periods each day, for which he was paid an honorarium of Rs.100/- for the duration of the programme. As contact teachers earn an additional amount, those who are close to the headmasters are more likely to be selected for the programme. It would perhaps be better if

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the Board themselves make a rigorous selection of the contact teachers.

It was further observed that the selected contact teachers were not given any orientation in the methodology of taking contact classes. Teaching in a formal class is different from taking a class in a contact programme. The whole philosophy and methodology has to be different. Since teachers for the contact programme are drawn from the formal system, this calls for orienting them about the methodology of teaching in a contact programme of a correspondence course.

There were some respondents who suggested abolition of additional fee for attending the contact programme.

#### 6. Other Correspondence Courses

All public institutions offering correspondence education at the school level do so in respect of secondary and higher secondary examination only. The successful candidates are awarded certificates at par with the successful candidates of the formal institutions. How obtaining a certificate of having passed higher secondary examination was going to be helpful to them was not ascertained from the respondents in the present study. Perhaps, the predominant reason of the students to pass the higher secondary examination was to better their potential in the employment market. It is generally felt that the employment potential of the youth could further be improved if non-conventional job-oriented courses are introduced by the educational institutions. This should better

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their chances of not only being employed in the market, but could also lead to greater self-employment. What do the correspondence students themselves think about it? When asked whether they would like the Board to introduce some correspondence courses other than those for the secondary and the higher secondary examinations, as many as 252 respondents (68%) replied in affirmative. Among them, 220 respondents mentioned specifically several new courses, which should be taught through correspondence by the Board. The suggested courses are classified in Table 22.

Table 22: New Correspondence Courses suggested by the respondents

Sl.No.	Suggested courses	No. and % age of respondents
1.	Technical courses like radio and TV electronics, electrician, mining and geology	75 (34)
2.	Vocational courses like making of soaps detergents and candles, agriculture, veterinary science dairying, handicrafts, tourism, photography, carpentry, sewing, and tailoring, and typing composing and printing.	64 (29)
3.	Professional courses like business management, hotel management, library science, advanced accountancy, ayurvedic, music, art and printing and teacher and patwari training and storekeeping.	53 (24)
4.	Proficiency in languages like Sanskrit, Urdu and English.	66 (30)
5.	Correspondence course at lower levels than the secondary examination.	31 (14)
6.	General knowledge and preparation for competitive examinations	20 (9)
7.	Correspondence courses at undergraduate and post-graduate levels	11 (5)
8.	Letter writing	4 (2)



The greatest demand was for technical, vocational and professional courses in that order. Obviously, at the back of their mind the respondents had the employment potential in view while suggesting these courses.

However, as many as 30% of the respondents also opted for correspondence courses to increase proficiency in languages mostly in English, including writing of letters.

Then, some other respondents wanted introduction of correspondence courses to help the students prepare themselves for competitive examinations and up-date their general knowledge.

The above account indicates that some non-conventional correspondence courses if introduced could prove popular. Some courses like language development, could be popular even if these may not carry a certificate.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### (1) SUMMARY

##### 1.1 Background Information

Realising that sufficient information about the status of correspondence education at the school level did not exist, and that collection of such information would be helpful to the planners, the Centre for Educational Technology decided to conduct a series of in-depth studies in this respect. The present study on correspondence courses offered by the Board of Secondary Education of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh is second in the series; the first having been completed in respect of Patrachar Vidyalaya, Delhi.

The study was done in two phases. In the first phase, relevant background information was collected from the two Boards by contacting the concerned officials personally. In the second phase, data were collected from a sample of correspondence students by mailing them a questionnaire.

Since a complete list of the students enrolled with the Board of Secondary Education, Madhya Pradesh, for the year 1981-82, was not available till the end of April, 1982, the second phase of the study had to be abandoned in their case.

As for the Rajasthan Board, during the year 1981-82, there were 10,992 students on roll for the one-year higher secondary examination course in the faculties of arts, commerce and science. Every 20th students on the respective lists was selected to constitute the sample, making a total sample of 548 students.

The data were collected during the period March - April, 1982 through a mailed questionnaire. The filled-in questionnaire was received from 451 respondents, making more than 82% of the total sample.

## 1.2 Findings

### Background Information

1.2.1 The Rajasthan Board offer two correspondence courses, one at the secondary level (class X) and the other at the higher secondary level (class XI). The latter, which is the focus of the present study is compulsory for all the private students, except for some categories of students. During the year 1981-82, about 68% of the private candidates taking the higher secondary examination went through the correspondence course.

1.2.2 The course is open to the residents of Rajasthan only, and is advertised in the newspapers.

1.2.3 Distribution of the application forms for enrolment in the course is centrally done from the office of the Board at Ajmer. However, application forms to sit in the examination can be had from and submitted at any of the several examination centres (about 700) spread all over the states. After enrolling the candidates for the course, the Board decide about their eligibility to take the examination.

1.2.4 Fees for the course is Rs.5/- towards registration and Rs.135/- towards tuition, payable in two instalments.

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1.2.5 The correspondence unit is a constituent unit of the Board and functions within its acts and regulations, and under the authority of the Chairman and the Secretary of the Board.

1.2.6 The correspondence unit is headed by a Director, but the post is lying vacant since long.

1.2.7 Out of the two posts of the Assistant Directors originally provided for, one stands abolished. The Assistant Director(Admin) looks after academic matter as well. The incumbent enjoys limited financial, administrative and academic autonomy.

1.2.7 The administration wing maintains a Lesson Bank, a students' Response Sheet Unit, a Unit for Proof Reading, four cells for despatch of lessons, and an Accounts Section.

1.2.8 The academic wing is staffed by three lecturers, one each in the faculties of arts, commerce and science and one part-time lecturer in History. The academic wing is responsible for the preparation of the lessons and arrangements of all other academic inputs for the two correspondence courses.

1.2.9 The correspondence unit is self-financing. Not only that, there are some savings, which are pooled in the general funds of the Board.

#### Students' Characteristics

1.2.10 Quite a number of the respondents were disadvantaged in one way or the other, and would not have carried on with their regular schooling on that account.

1.2.11 About 28 and seven percent of the respondents were in the age group of 21 - 25 years and 26 - 40 years respectively. However, a majority of the students were below 20 years.

1.2.12 About one fourth of the respondents belonged to the scheduled and backward classes, about one half belonged to rural areas, about one third were employed and another 14% were apprentices. There was a time lag between leaving a regular school and joining the correspondence course in case of 45% of the respondents. In a majority of these cases (84%) the time lag was upto five years, but in a few cases it was as large as 17 years.

1.2.13. About one third of the respondents were married.

1.2.14 About 45% of the respondents had failed in the higher secondary examination, and wanted to retake the examination.

#### Reasons for taking Correspondence Courses

1.2.15 Students joined the correspondence course due to various reasons. Prominent among these were: employed or likely to be employed or required to attend to household chores (88%) non-availability of admission in regular schools (35%) post-school age (7%), guardians not in favour of attending a regular school (5%).

#### Lesson Materials

1.2.16 Correspondence lessons were not available on all subjects offered by the students, mainly due to shortage of staff in the academic wing.

1.2.17 Lesson materials were despatched 4 - 5 times during the year; each consignment consisting of 24 lesson units.

1.2.18 Most respondents (39%) received the first consignment of lesson in the month of October.

1.2.19 By the month of March, only 34% of the respondents reported the receipt of full compliment of the lesson materials.

1.2.20 About 57% of the respondents could not properly study the lesson materials by the time next despatch of lesson arrived.

1.2.21 About 79% of the respondents consulted books, notes and digests, and about half of the respondents sought help<sup>of</sup> other persons in their studies in addition to the lesson materials. Additional help was generally sought in Physics and Mathematics (science), Advanced Hindi, Civics, History and Hindi (arts) and Book Keeping, Hindi and Commercial Practice (Commerce) and English by students of all the three faculties.

1.2.22 About 39% of the respondents felt that there were printing mistakes in the lesson materials. They were, however, happy with the size of typed letters.

1.2.23 The lesson materials in English, Book-keeping, Mathematics, Physics, Sanskrit and Advanced Hindi were relatively considered more difficult to understand.

1.2.24. Most suggestions for bringing about improvement in lesson materials were with regard to timely and systematic despatch of lessons, making the lessons more understandable and comprehensive, preparing lessons on all subjects, framing questions for the students' assignments on the lines asked in the final examination, and preparing model answers to important questions.

Response Sheet Assignments

1.2.25 A majority (92% ) of the respondents were aware of the facility offered by the Board of evaluating students' assignments. However, only 20% of the respondents availed themselves of this facility in respect of all subjects, and 17% in respect of some subjects.

1.2.26. 23% of the respondents who had submitted the assignments received all of them back, 42% received only part of the assignments and another 17% did not hear anything from the Board in this respect.

1.2.27. 20% of the respondents, who had received back all or part of the assignments reported that the evaluators did not comment on the answers written by them and 52% found comments in some cases. Only 23% of the respondents reported to have received evaluators' comments in all cases.

1.2.8. Among those who reported receipt of evaluators' comments in all or some assignments, 55% found those useful, another 37% found those somewhat useful.

1.2.29 Salient suggestions advanced by the respondents for improving the effectiveness of the RSAs programme were: prompt return of teacher marked assignments (TMAs), availability of evaluators' concrete comments in TMAs, framing examination oriented questions, increasing the time limit for submission of RSAs, timely receipt of lesson materials, and the Board bearing the postage on RSAs submitted by the students,

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### Personal Contact Programme

1.2.30 Only 5% of the respondents attended the 10-day contact programme for the full term, and another 5% for the part of the term.

1.2.31 Among those who attended the PCP, 88% respondents found it beneficial as against only 7% who did not find it helpful.

1.2.32 Important suggestions to improve PCP included: (i) duration of the programme should be increased (ii) it should be held near the final examination (iii) number of contact centres should be increased (iv) students should be informed well in advance about the dates, duration, time and places of the contact programme and (v) only important topics in difficult subjects should be dealt with.

### Other courses

1.2.33 When asked whether the respondents would like the Board to introduce some correspondence courses other than those for the secondary and the higher secondary examinations, as many as 68% of the respondents replied in affirmative.

1.2.34 Among the non-conventional courses suggested, the greatest demand was for various technical, vocational and professional courses, followed by courses to increase proficiency in languages, particularly in English, and to increase competency in taking the competitive examinations and up-date general knowledge.

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## CONCLUSIONS

The most startling observation of the study was that the academic wing of the correspondence unit of the Board of Secondary Education, Rajasthan was staffed by only three lecturers, one each in the faculties of Arts, Commerce and Science, and one part time lecturer in History. And this staff was responsible for preparation of all study materials and arrangement of : other academic inputs for the two correspondence courses of the Board, offered by more than eleven thousand students every year.

The post of the Director of Correspondence Courses was lying vacant for quite some time past, and the only post of the Assistant Director (Academic) had since been abolished.

With top positions remaining vacant or abolished, and with only skelton staff at the bottom, the Correspondence Unit was reduced to a small appendage to the Board.

It may be recalled that the Board had set up the correspondence unit as its constituent unit to plan and execute correspondence courses to help out private candidates, who took its secondary and higher secondary examinations in large numbers. This was as far back as 1968. But the pass rate of the students taking the correspondence courses does not seem to have shown improvement over the years. Nor the relative performance of the correspondence students has significantly improved compared to that of regular students.

It may be seen that needs of the correspondence students are widely different from those of regular students. The methods of teaching and the approach has also to be different. It is recognised the world over that correspondence institutions, if started

as a part of the conventional examining bodies, must have appropriate organisational structure and sufficient autonomy and flexibility to meet the special needs of its students.

This does not appear to have happened in case of correspondence unit of <sup>the</sup>/Rajasthan Board, with the result that the correspondence teaching programmes of the Board have remained just a shade better than the home study courses.

The term home study is taken as self-instruction.

Correspondence teaching, on the other hand, implies a teaching responsibility on part of the institution offering the service. In other words, the emphasis in teaching by correspondence is on motivating and stimulating the students, giving them purposeful practice, repetition and reinforcement leading to learning, as is true of teaching by any other medium. According to Erdos\*

'if a course of study consists of no more than the issue of study material, whether or not related to a terminal examination and is not providing continuous teaching by a tutor, then the students' home study has, in fact, become self-instruction. But if the student is required throughout his course of study to send it at intervals, sufficiently frequent to enable the tutor to correct the weaknesses as soon as they appear and to give further instructions when it is needed, then the student continues to be taught throughout his course of study".

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\*Erdos Rence F. 'Teaching by Correspondence' Unesco Source Book. Longmans, UNESCO (1967).

Seen in this context the correspondence courses offered by the Board were nothing more than supply of lesson materials for home study and self-instruction of the students. The responsibility of teaching the students remained largely neglected.

It is felt that to put the correspondence teaching programme of the Board on a stronger footing, the organisational set up of the correspondence unit will have to be suitably expanded and restructured. A fairly different organisational set up than what exists at present would perhaps be necessary to meet the special types of work. The restructuring of the organisational and administrative management would first require an indepth study and analysis of the processes involved in different aspects of distance education. This should involve lot of effort and deliberation on the part of all concerned. However, broad indicators in respect of administrative and academic aspects are attempted as under:-

#### Administrative Functions

Talking of administrative functions first, it would be the task of the administrative organisation to bring about:-

- (1) Publicity, pre-registration counselling and routine correspondence with would be students requesting factual information.
- (2) Quick enrolment and registration of students.
- (3) Printing, warehouse and despatch of the course materials.
- (4) Correct and timely delivery of course materials, information, curriculars etc.

- (5) Short turn-a-round time for the students' assignments
- (6) accurate, easily available registration data and other necessary statistics.
- (7) maintenance of students' records to check on their progress and procedures for distributing reminders to those who fall behind or seem to be in danger of dropping out
- (8) arranging facilities - when needed - for contact programmes and other students' services.
- (9) correct, competent and courteous treatment of all letters sent by the students applying for information, advice, containing questions, requests, complaints or suggestions and proper reception of students calling in person or on the phone.
- (10) general efficiency in all the above activities at a reasonable cost.

From what the respondents wrote it appeared that they felt a sort of psychological isolation between themselves and the Board. They wished that apart from mailing the lesson notes, the correspondence unit might correspond more freely and more frequently with them. Some students mentioned that their postal queries were not considered. There is perhaps an urgent need to create a cell having the exclusive activity of keeping public relations with the correspondence students. In addition, the individual faculties would do well to correspond with their students with a view to

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keep on motivating them, sending a word of praise to promising students, exhorting those who are not doing so well and encouraging the laggards to do better.

Another way of creating rapport with students could be to keep on obtaining feedback from them about lesson materials, and other students' services offered by the Board. In fact, carrying out research on different aspects of the correspondence teaching programme, and collection and compilation of relevant data may be considered an important and regular activity of the correspondence unit. For this purpose, a separate research, evaluation and monitoring cell may be constituted as a part of the unit.

It seems important to strengthen the section concerned with the despatch of the lesson units. Students would very much appreciate receipt of first consignment of the lessons soon after their enrolment, and subsequent ones at suitably spaced regular intervals. Students would further appreciate if all lesson units are in their hands in good time before the examinations commence. The study has shown that this does not happen in most of the cases.

The present set up provides for four cells, each manned by one UDC and two LDCs, which first attend to the enrolment of the students in the correspondence courses. Only after the enrolment work is over, these cells get on to the job of preparing parcels of the lesson materials and affixing slips containing addresses of the students on the parcels. The parcels are prepared faculty wise, and not simultaneously for the students of all the three faculties.

It would perhaps be better if there are separate cells for enrolling the students/<sup>and</sup>for preparing the lesson parcels. Despatch of the first consignment of the lessons need not wait till the last date of the receipt of the application forms. To improve the matters further, the parcels in respect of the different faculties may be prepared before hand and kept in readiness, and may be despatched to a student as soon as the enrolment formalities in his/her case are complete.

With a view to give as much time span to the correspondence students as available to the regular students to complete the syllabus, it is suggested that the course should commence soon after the Board declares results of their secondary examination. Secondly, the process of enrolment and admission may be managed in such a manner that a student, if found eligible, gets first despatch of lessons within about a fortnight or so of receipt of his/her application for enrolment by the Board.

Apart from these measures to allow more time to correspondence students to enable them to complete the course, the flexibility in the scheme of examination as recommended by the Working Group on Correspondence Education set up by the Board in 1979 may also be considered. The Group felt that the correspondence students might be offered the option to clear the Higher Secondary Examination in two annual terms, if they so desired.

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As regards the processing of the Students' Response Sheets (SRS), there is at present one cell with a total staff of one UDC and one LDC. For want of adequate staff, the SRS are first allowed to be piled up till extra staff is temporarily engaged to sort out the sheets subjectwise and send them to the evaluators. Instead, it would be better to send the sheets to the evaluators soon after these are received so that the turn-around time can be reduced. There would also be a need to record the performance of the students before returning the sheets to the students. Sample checking of the sheets would ensure that the evaluators are doing their job well. The Cell would have to be suitably strengthened to cope with new responsibilities.

#### Simplifying administrative procedures

The study also points towards a need for simplifying certain administrative procedures for the benefit of the students. By way of an illustration, it may be mentioned that distribution of application forms for enrolment was centrally done from the office of the Board at Ajmer only. It was not clearly understood as to why the local examination centres (some 700 scattered throughout the state) also could not be entrusted with this responsibility. Similarly, it needs to be examined how the enrolment of a student and his/her eligibility to sit in the examination could be decided simultaneously. It could be otherwise quite frustrating for a student to have been enrolled first, and then denied admission to sit in the examination. It may be also necessary to simplify procedures so that the students may deposit the fees at the nearest examination centre as also at the Board's office, in cash or through a bank draft.

### Universalisation of Correspondence Courses

The idea of introducing the correspondence courses was to help out the private students. If that is so, it is not clearly understood as to why certain categories of students should be exempted from going through the course. This gives the impression that the private candidates can as well do without going through the course.

If the intention is not to burden certain categories of students financially, they can be granted concessions in the payment of fees. It would otherwise be a good idea to make the course compulsory on part of all private students, granting exemptions only in exceptional cases.

### Academic functions

Now coming to the academic functions, the major thrust of academic functions of the correspondence unit will have to be on the preparation of the print material which is the ~~main~~ stay of the correspondence programme. But other supporting students' services i.e. the programme of the students' response sheet assignments (SRAs) and the personal contact programme (PCP) will also have to be considerably strengthened to make it a truly teaching programme.

### Preparation of print materials

Considering that correspondence students did not have an easy access to library facilities, that as many as 79% of the respondents depended on additional notes/digests and about 50% sought help of other persons in their studies, that in case of a number of students there was a time lag of a few years between their leaving a formal school and joining the correspondence course and that quite a few



students found the lesson materials difficult to understand, the lessons would have to be revised to make them more comprehensive and easily understandable. The lessons should aim not only to cover the syllabus in force, but also help the students refresh their existing knowledge about the subject matter. True, some students who retake the examination or who are fresh drop outs may find such elaborate materials unnecessary. But it is the average student, who is in majority, and his entry behaviour that the Board has to keep in mind while revising the lessons. The Board may even consider introduction of some 'bridge' and 'foundation' courses for those who may like to spend some time going through them. There should be a provision of revising the lessons frequently based on feed-back obtained from the students.

To start with revision of the lessons may be taken up in such subjects as are considered more difficult by the students. The present study has shown that English, Book Keeping, Mathematics, Physics, Sanskrit and Advanced Hindi were relatively considered more difficult. English was a common subject for the students of all the faculties, and needed immediate attention. However, eventually lessons would have to be revised in all subjects. Students would further appreciate if correspondence lessons are available on all such subjects as offered by the Board. Exempting the students from paying the second instalment of Rs.50/- towards the tuition fee if correspondence lessons were available only on part of the optional subjects may be a very poor consolation

to them. Preparation of lessons on all subjects would particularly help the rural students who may not have easy access to books or other reading materials.

For the same reason, the lessons in the languages, should be self-sufficient. At present the practice is reproduce a few opening lines of the poems etc in the correspondence lessons, and to ask the students to refer to the text books for full reading. The students would appreciate self-contained lessons instead.

Needless to say, selection of teachers with a flair of writing and orienting them further in the art of writing for self-instruction would be the pre-requisite for preparation of good lessons. There is perhaps a need to create a pool of trained writers in each subject. The orientation for writing correspondence lessons should also include designing meaningful assignments to test specific skills/abilities of the students. Regular workshops, seminars and conferences may be organised for updating knowledge of the correspondence writers and for their professional advancement.

As for the procedure of preparing the lessons, the experience of the Open School in New Delhi for adopting the 'subject team approach' may prove fruitful. It entails organising subject teams comprising of a team leader, lesson writers, reviewers, artists and production specialists on each subject, with a provision of field testing the lessons before finalising them.

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There should also be a provision of revising the lessons frequently. Lessons may be revised whenever necessitated by changes in syllabi, and to up-date the information in subjects like economics. Since the print material is the main learning resource in the correspondence programme, efforts should be towards its constant improvement.

### Students' Assignments

Some research studies have shown that whether or not students submit assignments it makes no difference in their performance in the examination. Some other studies have brought out the significant contribution of students' assignments in their success in the examination. The findings in this respect are not conclusive. Moreover, most of these studies were carried out abroad, and all with undergraduate and post-graduate students and none with the secondary students. The present study has shown that a large number of correspondence students took the help of additional study materials such as notes/digests, and depended on other persons in their studies. It is felt that the practice of providing assignments consisting of questions, problems and other tasks, the replies and solutions of which are to be submitted by the students for comments, evaluation and correction will be helpful to the students to a great extent. This didactic conversation will not only benefit the students by giving them effective feedback on their performance and helping them to correct their mistakes and control their progress, but will also serve as a good means of obtaining feedback on the quality of the study materials and diagnosing topics, which most students

find difficult to understand. In order to achieve these objectives, the whole scheme of RSAs will have to be put on a new pedestal.

To start with, there is, perhaps, an urgent need to train evaluators and to streamline the procedure of returning the tutor marked assignments to the students with a minimum delay. The circuit time or turn around time for assignments is worth particular attention as it has been proved through some studies that it exercises great influence on the completion rate and study intensity of students. It would also be necessary to maintain records with regard to receipt and return of students' assignments and marks obtained by the students in each assignment. This information would help not only remind the defaulters, encourage good performers and motivate low scores, but also provide a basis of improving and revising the reading materials. Since an important idea of the assignment work should be to instil a habit of regular studies among the students, they should be required to send the assignments at certain fixed points of time during the year, and this should be adhered to granting exceptions only in special cases. Practice in some places in the West is to withhold mailing of the next packet of the lesson materials till assignments are received. Needless to say, the despatch of the lessons will have to be properly spaced and timed to enable the students to submit the assignments regularly.

The suggestion of some respondents that the Board should pay for the postage in respect of assignments submitted by the students deserves careful consideration. It would particularly help the poor students, and also those from remote rural areas where facilities for purchase of stamps may not be easily accessible. At the best, the Board may make the students aware of postal concessions that could be available to them for mailing their response sheets if they write 'pupils' exercise for correction vide P.O. Guide No.114(8)' on them.

#### Contact Programme

Personal Contact Programme for a duration of about 4 - 5 weeks near the examination should further help to build confidence among the students. The two important factors brought out by the study, to strengthen the contact programme would be (i) to increase the number of contact centres and (ii) to select the right type of teachers and train them in taking the contact classes.

The contact centres may be set up on the basis of certain number of students putting up in a particular locality, say one centre after every 500 students or so, so that the student has to travel a long distance to reach a centre.

It would further help the students if they are provided with lodging facilities free of cost. Since contact programme is organised in vacations, when schools are closed, it should not be difficult to put up students, who may so desire, in the premises of the selected schools.

Selection and training of the right type of teachers is of particular importance as otherwise the face-to-face sessions may not only prove unhelpful but even harmful. The main emphasis during any good contact programme should be to develop initiative among the students to ask questions, to guide them, to advise them, to clarify their doubts with a view to improve learning on their part. The whole philosophy and approach has to be different from the conventional class-room teaching. Since teachers for the contact programme are drawn from the regular schools they are apt to take command and teach instead of guiding or counselling. This often leads to the students being given too much instruction, or introduced to completely new and conflicting situations near the examination. There is, therefore, a need to select teachers and orient them in organising contact sessions before putting them on the job.

The dates and duration ~~xxxx~~ of the programme and the contact centres and their respective contact teachers may be announced well in time so that students may adjust their own programme accordingly and may write to the teachers in advance about the nature of their difficulties, if they so desire.

### General

The correspondence unit may also like to experiment with the introduction of a few non-conventional and need-based sources. The present study has shown that there was a demand for these courses on the part of the students.

To take these and other increased academic responsibilities, the academic set up of the correspondence unit will have to be suitably expanded and restructured. The present position of three full time lecturers and one part time lecturer seems totally inadequate. It is suggested that there may be one full time lecturer for each major subject (offered by more than 20% students or so) and a senior lecturer in each faculty to co-ordinate. The post of the Assistant Director (Academic) now abolished may be revived to co-ordinate the work of different faculties, and immediate steps taken to fill the post of the Director of Correspondence Courses.

Since needs for the correspondence students are different, and since it would also need a great deal of experimentation and trial to perfect the techniques of teaching by correspondence it would be necessary to grant some measure of autonomy and flexibility to the unit to plan and to execute its own activities. It is suggested that the correspondence unit may have its own Managing Committee to manage its affairs, and the programmes once approved by the Committee should be provided with adequate funds.

The correspondence system of education is to reach education to certain deprived and unprivileged sections of the society as a 'second chance'. It promises to equalise and democratise educational opportunities to a large extent. The correspondence programme may not be looked upon as a means to earn extra finances or even to be self-financing. This attitude must change. If teaching by correspondence is to further extend the frontiers of education, and prove itself as an alternative to the formal system of teaching, it must be provided with all necessary resources to flourish and grow. }

x प्रश्नावली x

१ माध्यमिक शिक्षा बोर्ड, राजस्थान, अजमेर द्वारा संचालित पत्राचार  
पाठ्यक्रम, हायर सैकेण्डरी परीक्षा के विद्यार्थियों के लिए

1. आपका लिंग  
पुरुष ☐ महिला ☐
2. क्या आप  
विवाहित हैं ☐ अविवाहित हैं ☐
3. क्या आप ग्राम में रहते हैं या किसी कस्बे अथवा शहर में  
ग्राम में ☐ कस्बे अथवा शहर में ☐
4. आपकी आयु  
17 वर्ष से कम ☐ 25-30 वर्ष ☐  
17-20 वर्ष ☐ 30-40 वर्ष ☐  
20-25 वर्ष ☐ 40 वर्ष से अधिक ☐
5. क्या आप अनुसूचित, अनुसूचित जनजाति अथवा पिछड़ी जाति से हैं ?  
हाँ ☐ नहीं ☐
6. क्या आप पढ़ाई के अतिरिक्त  
१ क१ कोई और काम धन्धा भी करते हैं, ☐  
अथवा १ ख१ कोई काम सीख रहे हैं, ☐  
अथवा १ ग१ अभी कोई काम धन्धा नहीं करते ☐ सोधे प्र० 8 पर जाइये  
प्र० 7 आप पर लागू नहीं १
7. आप कौन सा काम करते हैं अथवा सीख रहे हैं ?

पत्राचार पाठ्यक्रम

8. पत्राचार पाठ्यक्रम में प्रवेश करने से पहले आप किसी शाला में पढ़ते होगे ।  
शाला को छोड़ने और पत्राचार पाठ्यक्रम में प्रवेश करने के बीच कितने वर्ष  
का अंतर था ?



६ वर्ष ..... वर्ष

७. कोई अन्तर नहीं था, शाला छोड़ने के उसी वर्ष ही

पत्राचार में प्रवेश ले लिया ☐

9. क्या आप पूर्व के किसी वर्ष में इस बोर्ड की हायर सैकेंडरी परीक्षा में असफल रहे हैं  
हाँ ☐ नहीं ☐

10. आप पत्राचार पाठ्यक्रम में कौन से वर्ग के छात्र हैं ?

कला ☐ वाणिज्य ☐ विज्ञान ☐

11. अभिनेता/अभिनेत्री तथा अभिनेत्री/अभिनेता के अतिरिक्त आपने कौन से तीन  
ऐच्छिक विषय लिए हैं ?

1..... 2..... 3.....

12. पत्राचार पाठ्यक्रम में प्रवेश करने के विभिन्न कारण हो सकते हैं। इनमें से  
कुछ ऐसे कारण नीचे दिये गये हैं। इन्हें ध्यान में पढ़िये और आप पर जो  
लागू हो उनके सामने उही वाचिन्ह  $\{ \text{✓} \}$  लगाये।  $\{ \text{✓} \}$  इसके लिए एक से अधिक  
कारण भी हो सकते हैं  $\{ \text{✓} \}$ :-

1. रोजगार में हूँ, इसलिए मैं नियमित शाला में नहीं जा पाता/पाती ☐
2. काम सीख रहा/रही हूँ इसलिये नियमित शाला में नहीं जा पाता/पाती ☐
3. काम की तलाश में हूँ, इसलिये नियमित शाला में नहीं जा पाता/पाती ☐
4. घर के काम काज में अवकाश नहीं मिलता, इसलिये नियमित शाला में  
नहीं जा पाता/पाती ☐
5. पौ-वाप/पति मुझे शाला भेजना पसन्द नहीं करते ☐
6. मेरी आयु कुछ बड़ी है, और शाला जाने में शर्ष लाती है ☐
7. नियमित शाला में प्रवेश नहीं मिला ☐
8. मैं विकलांग हूँ ☐
9. अन्य कोई कारण, यहाँ स्पष्ट कीजिये  $\{ \text{✓} \}$ :-

### पाठ्य सामग्री

13. 1981-82 वर्ष के लिये पत्राचार पाठ्यक्रम के प्रवेश सितम्बर 1981 में लगभग सम्पूर्ण  
हो चुके थे। आपको प्रथाचार पाठ्य सामग्री किस माह में मिली ?  
..... माह में

14. आपको और कितनी बार पाठ्य सामग्री पिलने की आशा है ?

क) .....बार

ख) जयस्त पाठ्य सामग्री मिल चुकी है

☐

ग) प्ले पता नहीं

☐

15. एक बार में मिली कुल पाठ्य सामग्री को ध्यान में रखते हुए यह बताइये कि क्या आप इसे अपनी पाठ्य सामग्री आने तक पूरी तरह पढ़ लेते हैं ?

क) हाँ, आसानी से

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ख) हाँ, परन्तु प्ले कछा पारश्रम करना पड़ता है

☐

ग) नहीं, मैं इसे पूरी तरह नहीं पढ़ पाता/पाती

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16. क्या पाठ्य सामग्री के अतिरिक्त अन्य प्रकार की सामग्री जैसे पुस्तकें, कुन्जो, नोट्स इत्यादि को सहायता भी आपको लेनी पड़ती है ?

हाँ

☐

नहीं

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17. यदि हाँ, तो कौन-कौन से विषयों में ?

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18. क्या पढ़ने में किसी व्यक्ति जैसे पाँ/बाप/भाई/बहन/मित्र/टियूटर इत्यादि की आपको सहायता भी लेनी पड़ती है ?

हाँ

☐

नहीं

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19. यदि हाँ, तो अधिकतर कौन-कौन से विषयों में ?

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20. प्रश्न 20, 21, 22, 23, तथा 24, प्रत्येक विषय की पाठ्य सामग्री के विभिन्न पक्षों पर आपके विचार जानने के बारे में हैं। सबसे पहले पाठ्य वस्तु की भाषा के बारे में आप क्या सोचते हैं, यह बताइये ?

विषय

पाठ्य वस्तु की भाषा

कठिन है, अपने आप पढ़ने

सरल है, अपने

से समझ में नहीं आती

आप पढ़ने में स

आ जाती है

1. हिन्दी

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यहाँ अपने 2. अंग्रेजी

☐
☐

तीन ऐच्छिक 3.

☐
☐

विषयों के 4.

☐
☐

नाम लिखिये 5.

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21. छपी सागरी के अक्षरों के टाइप के आकार के बारे में आपको क्या विचार है ?  
बहुत छोटी है ☐ ठीक ठीक है ☐ बहुत मोटी है ☐
22. छपी सागरी की अशुद्धता के बारे में आपको क्या धारणा है ?  
बहुत अशुद्धियाँ हैं ☐ कुछ अशुद्धियाँ हैं ☐  
अधिकतर शुद्ध है ☐
23. विषय वस्तु की सत्यता के बारे में आप क्या सोचते हैं ?  
बहुत झूटियाँ हैं ☐ कुछ झूटियाँ हैं ☐  
अधिकतर सही है ☐
24. पाठ्य-सागरी पम्बन्धों यदि आप कुछ सुझाव देना चाहें तो यहाँ प्रश्न में लिखीये ।

#### उत्तर पत्र

25. प्रत्येक पत्र के उपरि पाठों में से छः पाठों के अन्त में " छात्र-उत्तर पत्र " दिये जाते हैं । यदि छात्र चाहें तो उन प्रश्नों के उत्तर लिखकर बोर्ड की जाँच के लिए भेज सकते हैं । क्या आप अभी तक कुछ उत्तर पत्र लिखकर बोर्ड को भेज पाये हैं ?  
§ क० हाँ, प्रत्येक विषय में ☐  
§ ख० हाँ, कुछ विषयों में ☐  
§ ग० नहीं, मैं अभी तक नहीं भेज पाया/पायी ☐ § सीधे प्र० 29 पर  
§ घ० नहीं, मुझे इस बारे में जानकारी नहीं थी ☐ जाइये §
26. उत्तर पत्र जाँच करने के पश्चात् बोर्ड इन्हें अपने सुझावों सहित छात्रों को वापस भेज देता है ताकि छात्र अपनी झूटियों को सुधार सकें । यदि आपने उत्तर-पत्र भेजे थे तो क्या आपको जैसा हुए उत्तर-पत्र वापस मिले हैं ?  
§ क० हाँ, सभी भेजे हुए उत्तर-पत्र वापस मिल गये हैं ☐  
§ ख० हाँ, कुछ उत्तर पत्र मिले हैं ☐ § सीधे प्र० 29  
§ ग० नहीं, अभी तक नहीं मिले ☐ पर जाइये §

27. जो जैव हुए उत्तर-पत्र आपको वापस मिले हैं, क्या उनमें केवल अंक दिये गये थे या कुछ सुझाव भी लिखे थे।

क. केवल अंक थे

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सोधे प्र० 29 पर जाइये

ख. सभी में सुझाव भी थे

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ग. कुछ में सुझाव भी थे

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28. क्या आपको जैव हुए उत्तर पत्रों में बोर्ड द्वारा दिये गये सुझाव ऐसे लगते हैं जिसे पढ़कर विषयवस्तु को और अच्छी तरह समझने में सहायता मिले ?

क. हाँ, काफी सहायता मिलती है

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ख. हाँ, कुछ हद तक मिलती है

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ग. नहीं, बिल्कुल नहीं

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29. उत्तर पत्र प्रणाली को और अच्छा तथा उपयोगी बनाने के लिए आपके क्या सुझाव हैं, यहाँ संक्षेप में लिखिये।

### सम्पर्क कार्यक्रम

30. इस वर्ष 1981-82 में बोर्ड ने राजस्थान के 11 मुख्य नगरों में सम्पर्क कार्य क्रम आयोजित किया। प्रत्येक केन्द्र में दस दिन की अवधि के लिए छात्रों की अध्ययन सम्बन्धी बाँटनाइयों को हल करने तथा बाँठन प्रकरणों पर अध्यापन को व्यवस्था की गई। क्या आप इस कार्यक्रम में भाग ले पाये ?

क. हाँ, पूरे दस दिन के लिए

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ख. हाँ, परन्तु कुछ दिन के लिए

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ग. नहीं, मुझे सूचना थी परन्तु मैं भाग नहीं ले पाया/पाई

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घ. नहीं, मुझे इस कार्यक्रम के बारे में कोई सूचना नहीं थी

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सोधे प्र० 35 जाइये

31. आपको सम्पर्क कार्यक्रम के सफा, अवधि तथा विषय सम्बन्धी जानकारी कैसे मिली

32. यदि आप भाग ले पाये, तो क्या इससे विषयों को और अच्छी तरह सीखने में आपको लाभ हुआ ?
- ॥ क॥ हाँ, सभी विषयों में लाभ हुआ ☐
- ॥ ख॥ हाँ, कुछ विषयों में लाभ हुआ ☐
- ॥ ग॥ नहीं, कोई लाभ नहीं हुआ ☐ ॥ सीधे प्र० 35 पर जाइये ॥
33. यदि कुछ विषयों में ही लाभ हुआ तो ये कौन-कौन से विषय थे ?
- .....
34. यदि कोई लाभ नहीं हुआ तो आप ऐसा क्यों समझते हैं ?
35. सम्पर्क कार्यक्रम को प्रणाली सुसम्प, अवधि केन्द्रों तथा विषयों का चुनाव आदि को और अधिक उपयोगी बनाने के लिये आदि आपके कुछ सुझाव हों तो लिखिये

### अन्य कोर्स

36. अभी तक केवल सैकण्डरी तथा हायर सैकण्डरी पाठ्यक्रम के लिये ही बोर्ड द्वारा पत्राचार पाठ्यक्रम की व्यवस्था है क्या आप चाहते हैं कि कुछ अन्य कोर्सों पर भी पत्राचार पाठ्यक्रम की योजना बनाई जाये ?
- हाँ ☐ नहीं ☐
37. यदि हाँ, तो आपके विचार में ऐसे कौन कौन से कोर्स हैं जिनके पर बोर्ड पत्राचार पाठ्यक्रम की व्यवस्था करे ?
38. जो काम धन्धा आप करते हैं अथवा सीख रहे हैं अथवा भविष्य में करना चाहते हैं, क्या उससे सम्बन्धित भी कुछ ऐसे कोर्स हैं जो आप पत्राचार पाठ्यक्रम की प्रणाली द्वारा पढ़ना चाहेंगे ?
- हाँ ☐ नहीं ☐

39. यदि हाँ, तो ऐसे कौन-कौन से कोर्स आपके विचार में हैं ?

॥ प्रश्न 40-41 केवल विज्ञान गृह के छात्रों के लिए है तथा जिन्होंने कलावर्ग के अन्तर्गत गृह-विज्ञान का विषय लिया है ॥

40. विज्ञान वर्ग तथा कलावर्ग के अन्तर्गत गृह विज्ञान का विषय लेने वाले छात्रों को 60 का तात्पर्य प्राप्त विषय के हिसाब से प्रयोगिक कार्य पूर्ण करने होते हैं ।

क्या आप यह कार्य पूर्ण कर लिया है ?

॥ क॥ हाँ, सभी विषयों में

॥ ख॥ हाँ, कुछ विषयों में

॥ ग॥ नहीं, यह बात भुझ पर लागू नहीं होती

॥ घ॥ नहीं, मुझे इस बारे में जानकारी नहीं थी

41. प्रयोगिक कार्य पूर्ण करने तथा इस कार्य सम्बन्ध प्रमाण पत्र प्राप्त करने में यदि आपको कोई कठिनाई आई हो, तो उसका संक्षिप्त विवरण यहाँ लिखें ।

42. आपने इस प्रश्नावली के पूर्व खण्डों में पत्राचार पाठ्यक्रम के विभिन्न पक्षों को सुधारने के लिये अपने सुझाव दिये हैं । इनके अतिरिक्त यदि आपके अन्य सुझाव हों तो यहाँ लिखिये ।